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Revised 22-Oct-2003

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE MASTER PLANS

Introduction and Background

The City Of Hamilton seeks to revitalise the Downtown core by making City streets more vibrant and pedestrian friendly.

The designs and slated improvements are based on planning studies undertaken over the last decade. The most recent of these is the award winning *(OPPI Award 2002)* Downtown Secondary and Transportation Master Plans ***"Putting People First : The New Plans for Downtown Hamilton"***.

Approved by Council in 2002, the Downtown Secondary Plans are the guiding documents for future land use and transportation improvements in the core. With the 10-year Capital Budget Plan prepared for the Downtown, the City now has a policy structure to begin revitalizing the Downtown.

The Downtown Secondary Plans "Putting People First" principles :

1. Use public outdoor space improvements as the catalyst for downtown revitalization.
2. Strengthen the connection to neighbourhoods, the Waterfront, and the Escarpment.
3. Build on the existing strength of our city, such as adaptive re-use of heritage structures and highlighting the natural geographic context of the city.
4. Make downtown living attractive by initiating streetscape improvement, and encouraging private investment.
5. Generate retail and commercial activities within diverse neighbourhoods.

The Hamilton Downtown Streetscape Master Plan adopts a comprehensive and integrated approach toward the urban design and public realm contexts to support and build upon the recommendations of the Downtown Secondary Plan, the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, the Port Land Use Plan as well as key findings emerging through key community consultation events.

The Master Plan establishes a clear vision and action plan for a number of streets to establish a safe, attractive, pedestrian friendly and green public environment as a renewed setting for continued economic, social, cultural neighbourhood and recreational development within the core city area.

The Goals of the Streetscape Master Plan

- Enhance the pedestrian amenity and civic image of the downtown core
- Strengthen linkages to the waterfront, the escarpment, to neighbourhoods and other key areas of the city
- Identify key civic spaces and priority areas for specific or special streetscape treatment
- Develop recommendations for the enhancement of open space resources within the city
- Establish a high standard of design as a model for private sector initiatives

What are Mobility and Traditional Streets?

Bay Street, James Street, John Street (all from the Escarpment to the Waterfront) and Cannon Street and Hunter Street (from Queen Street to Wellington Street) are Mobility Streets that accommodate vehicular through-traffic in the Downtown core. They will accommodate either one-way or two-way traffic, and will provide safe movements for pedestrians and cyclists.

Traditional Streets, such as Hughson Street (from Charlton Avenue to Murray Street) and King William Street (from James Street to Wellington Street) serve as pedestrian connectors between civic, cultural, entertainment and residential precincts within the Downtown core, and where pedestrians are given priority.

What are Streetscape Improvements?

"Streetscape", describes the public portions of the street, and in particular how we use and experience these areas as pedestrians. Public areas such as sidewalks, streets, open spaces, and green spaces can be made more attractive, safer, and vibrant through a variety of improvements and enhancements.

With appropriate designs, we can make our streets safer for pedestrian and vehicle traffic, entice people to visit downtown by beautifying public spaces, and spur further private investment in the core.

Streetscape Improvement Designs call for :

- Wider and safer sidewalks
- More trees with continuous green boulevards
- Full accessibility for all age and user groups (i.e. implementing Urban Braille and other accessibility standards)
- Better light standards
- Road improvements including special treatment of intersections
- Maintaining, when possible, existing on-street parking
- Enhancing existing character with the use of design themes, and enrichment of public spaces with public art

How much would this kind of improvement cost?

To minimize costs, streetscape improvements will be carried out in conjunction with other infrastructure improvements undertaken by the City of Hamilton Public Works Department, over the next decade.

When opportunities for streetscape improvement arise, the City will use this set of illustrated proposals to guide detailed design implementation.

What is next?

There are two phases to this design exercise. The first phase is the Streetscape Master Plans, and the second phase is detailed design of specific sections of selected streets.

The panels on display are design concepts only. Details concerning specific elements such as turning radius, street furniture, or construction material for particular sites will not be addressed at this time.

Detailed design will be the next phase after the conceptual master plans, moving toward construction drawings and physical implementation.

When an opportunity for streetscape improvement arises, the community will again have another opportunity to look at the project in full detail, and provide us with feedback.

When are we going to see implementation?

Besides the work being undertaken on the Master Plans project there are currently three detailed design projects that are being developed in the Downtown. They are all improvement works developed in conjunction with other construction on the street. The three streetscape improvement sections are :

- Bay Street North from Main Street to York Boulevard
- King William Street from James Street North to Catharine Street North
- Hughson Street from Charlton Avenue to Murray Street

These projects are in the design development phase, with projected construction beginning in the spring of 2004. Stakeholders and the community are actively providing us with their comments, and we are very encouraged by the interest expressed to us.

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